

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-50 (canceled)

Claim 51 (new): A toner container for use with an image forming apparatus,
comprising:

a container body having a mouth configured to allow toner contained in the container
body to be discharged to a developing device; and

a mouthpiece member at the mouth of the container body and including a shutter
configured to allow a nozzle at a setting portion of the image forming apparatus to protrude
into the shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion, and configured to
seal the mouth when the toner container is not mounted at the setting portion,

wherein a diameter of the shutter substantially matches a diameter of the nozzle.

Claim 52 (new): The toner container of Claim 51, wherein,

the shutter includes a sealing member, and

the diameter of the shutter is an inner diameter of a sealing member.

Claim 53 (new): The toner container of Claim 52, wherein the sealing member is
made of an elastic material.

Claim 54 (new): The toner container of Claim 51, wherein the diameter of the nozzle
is greater than the diameter of the shutter such that the nozzle displaces a portion of the
shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 55 (new): The toner container of Claim 51, wherein,

the shutter includes a moveable piston member, and

a tip of the nozzle is configured to contact a tip of the piston member when the toner
container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 56 (new): The toner container of Claim 55, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is substantially equal to a diameter of the piston member.

Claim 57 (new): The toner container of Claim 55, wherein the nozzle displaces the piston member within the mouthpiece member when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 58 (new): The toner container of Claim 55, wherein the piston member is biased towards the nozzle by a resilient member.

Claim 59 (new): The toner container of Claim 59, wherein the resilient member is arranged as a coil spring.

Claim 60 (new): A toner container for use with an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a container body means for storing toner and having a mouth configured to allow toner contained in the container body means to be discharged to a developing device; and

a mouthpiece member means at the mouth of the container body for supporting a shutter means, the shutter means for allowing a nozzle at a setting portion of the image forming apparatus to protrude into the mouthpiece member means when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion, and for sealing the mouth when the toner container is not mounted at the setting portion,

wherein a diameter of the shutter means substantially matches a diameter of the nozzle.

Claim 61 (new): The toner container of Claim 60, wherein,

the shutter means includes a sealing member, and

the diameter of the shutter means is an inner diameter of the sealing member.

Claim 62 (new): The toner container of Claim 61, wherein the sealing member is made of an elastic material.

Claim 63 (new): The toner container of Claim 60, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is greater than the diameter of the shutter means such that the nozzle displaces a portion of the shutter means when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 64 (new): The toner container of Claim 60, wherein,
the shutter means includes a moveable piston member, and
a tip of the nozzle is configured to contact a tip of the piston member when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 65 (new): The toner container of Claim 64, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is substantially equal to a diameter of the piston member.

Claim 66 (new): The toner container of Claim 64, wherein the nozzle displaces the piston member within the mouthpiece member means when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 67 (new): The toner container of Claim 64, including a biasing means for biasing the piston member towards the nozzle.

Claim 68 (new): The toner container of Claim 67, wherein the biasing means is arranged as a coil spring.

Claim 69 (new): A method for replenishing toner, comprising:
removing toner from a container body through a shutter included in a mouthpiece member at a mouth of the container body so as to discharge the toner to a developing device, the shutter being configured to allow a nozzle at a setting portion of an image forming apparatus to protrude into the shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion, and to seal the mouth when the toner container is not mounted at the setting portion;
and

pumping air into the container body through the shutter during a period of time when the toner is not being removed from the container body,

wherein a diameter of the shutter substantially matches a diameter of the nozzle.

Claim 70 (new): The method of Claim 69, further comprising:

providing the shutter with a sealing member, wherein the diameter of the shutter is an inner diameter of a sealing member.

Claim 71 (new): The method of Claim 70, further comprising:

arranging the sealing member as an elastic material.

Claim 72 (new): The method of Claim 69, further comprising:

arranging the diameter of the nozzle to be greater than the diameter of the shutter such that the nozzle displaces a portion of the shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 73 (new): The method of Claim 69, further comprising:

arranging the shutter to include a moveable piston member, wherein a tip of the nozzle is configured to contact a tip of the piston member when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 74 (new): The method of Claim 73, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is substantially equal to a diameter of the piston member.

Claim 75 (new): The method of Claim 73, further comprising:

mounting the toner container at the setting portion such that the nozzle displaces the piston member within the mouthpiece member.

Claim 76 (new): The method of Claim 73, further comprising:

biasing the piston member towards the nozzle.

Claim 77 (new): The method of Claim 76, wherein the biasing step includes using a coil spring to bias the piston member towards the nozzle.

Claim 78 (new): A toner replenishing device for use in an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a toner conveyance path extending from a toner container to a developing device;
a toner delivery device configured to withdraw the toner from the toner container and to deliver the toner to the developing device along the toner conveyance path; and
an air supplying device configured to supply the toner container with air,
wherein the toner container includes:
a container body having a mouth configured to allow toner contained in the container body to be discharged to a developing device, and
a mouthpiece member at the mouth of the container body and including a shutter configured to allow a nozzle at a setting portion of the image forming apparatus to protrude into the shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion, and configured to seal the mouth when the toner container is not mounted at the setting portion,
wherein a diameter of the shutter substantially matches a diameter of the nozzle.

Claim 79 (new): The toner container of Claim 78, wherein,
the shutter includes a sealing member, and
the diameter of the shutter is an inner diameter of a sealing member.

Claim 80 (new): The toner container of Claim 79, wherein the sealing member is made of an elastic material.

Claim 81 (new): The toner container of Claim 78, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is greater than the diameter of the shutter such that the nozzle displaces a portion of the shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 82 (new): The toner container of Claim 78, wherein,
the shutter includes a moveable piston member, and
a tip of the nozzle is configured to contact a tip of the piston member when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 83 (new): The toner container of Claim 82, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is substantially equal to a diameter of the piston member.

Claim 84 (new): The toner container of Claim 82, wherein the nozzle displaces the piston member within the mouthpiece member when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 85 (new): The toner container of Claim 82, wherein the piston member is biased towards the nozzle by a resilient member.

Claim 86 (new): The toner container of Claim 85, wherein the resilient member is arranged as a coil spring.

Claim 87 (new): A toner container for use with an image forming apparatus, comprising:

a container body having a mouth configured to allow toner contained in the container body to be discharged to a developing device; and

a mouthpiece member at the mouth of the container body and including a shutter configured to allow a nozzle at a setting portion of the image forming apparatus to protrude into the shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion, and configured to seal the mouth when the toner container is not mounted at the setting portion,

wherein a diameter of the shutter and a diameter of the nozzle are of sizes such that toner contained in the container body is prevented from exiting between the mouthpiece member and the nozzle when the nozzle protrudes into the shutter.

Claim 88 (new): The toner container of Claim 87, wherein,
the shutter includes a sealing member, and

the diameter of the shutter is an inner diameter of a sealing member.

Claim 89 (new): The toner container of Claim 88, wherein the sealing member is made of an elastic material.

Claim 90 (new): The toner container of Claim 87, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is greater than the diameter of the shutter such that the nozzle displaces a portion of the shutter when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 91 (new): The toner container of Claim 87, wherein, the shutter includes a moveable piston member, and a tip of the nozzle is configured to contact a tip of the piston member when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 92 (new): The toner container of Claim 91, wherein the diameter of the nozzle is substantially equal to a diameter of the piston member.

Claim 93 (new): The toner container of Claim 91, wherein the nozzle displaces the piston member within the mouthpiece member when the toner container is mounted at the setting portion.

Claim 94 (new): The toner container of Claim 91, wherein the piston member is biased towards the nozzle by a resilient member.

Claim 95 (new): The toner container of Claim 94, wherein the resilient member is arranged as a coil spring.